

Episode 116: A new clarity in a COVID world with Jeffrey Tucker

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to The Bill Walton Show, featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and thinkers, fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics, and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton ([00:25](#)):

Welcome to The Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton. And if you're like me, you're wondering when this pandemic lockdown will come to an end. It's been since March 2020, and since then we haven't been going to gyms, we haven't gone to the theater. We've been wearing masks, we've got mask mandates. One mask was good for a while, but now we need two, and yesterday I was with somebody who had three masks on, and this thing seems to be growing exponentially, yet the virus does not seem to be getting worse, it seems to be ebbing. The thing that's interesting about this is masks or not mass actually seemed to predict your political views. And so, it's become a political hot button as well as a medical or health issue. And with me to talk this through with somebody who's done so much thinking about this Jeffrey Tucker, who is Editorial Director of the American Institute for Economic Research, and he modestly has a short biography on his website.

It says he's written thousands of articles, but then if you go on to the longer version on the website, it's more like about a 100,000 articles and you'd been involved with every single think tank I can imagine, just incredibly prolific. I'm really happy to be talking with you. Hey, before we jump into the pandemic and what we're going to do, where we are, and I've got a thousand questions up. Tell me about AIER, I've just discovered you guys in the last year or so and it's a very, very interesting collection of thinkers.

Jeffrey Tucker ([02:05](#)):

We were founded in 1933 at a time of great a national crisis, when there was a lack of leadership in defensive of freedom. And those times must've been a little like ours in the sense that weird things were going on, that nobody really expected. Nobody expected FDR to confiscate people's gold, for them to be national price controls and central planning, people thought that we had a constitution that would protect us from those kind of stuff it didn't. Government was really unleashed and disorienting people, farmers were being told they had to dig up their crops, and they was like, wait, aren't I supposed to be growing things? No, no, you have to dig them up.

Bill Walton ([02:43](#)):

Well, they did that in the Soviet Union as well.

Jeffrey Tucker ([02:45](#)):

It's also a time of really bad science, bad science proclaimed by high level scientists, that were celebrated by the media, like John Maynard Keynes, and so on, Rex Tugwell, and so on. Yeah, weird times. And there was this guy E.C. Harwood who was an MIT professor, he started really worried about academic freedom. He started getting notes from his Dean saying, we're probably going to fire you. Oh, maybe we won't, maybe we will. We're running out of money. Oh, wait, here's some money. And he got sick of it. And he's like, this isn't really working for me. So he founded the American Institute for

Economic Research as a research institute dedicated to a genuine science, scientific principles and enlightenment values to be independent of government and academia.

And that was in 1933 then. Sure enough, by 1935 or six, he got a take down order from FDR, saying, shut up. And he said, I don't think I'm going to do that. So he kept just writing and the thing grew, and he developed a lot of credibility.

Bill Walton ([03:55](#)):

Your CEO is Ed...

Jeffrey Tucker ([03:56](#)):

Yeah. Stringham.

Bill Walton ([03:59](#)):

George Gilder has joined there, and John Tamny, a lot of people.

Jeffrey Tucker ([04:02](#)):

A lot of people.

Bill Walton ([04:03](#)):

Emmy Wolf, I think, is there now.

Jeffrey Tucker ([04:04](#)):

Emmy Wolf is there, she's my colleague here founder of third-wave feminism and the author of The Beauty Myth. It's very interesting collection of people, and I tell you, I think you need these kinds of intellectual sanctuaries in the world. I wish we didn't have to have them, but from time to time, there are these moments in history where there's a crisis where genuine intellectuals need the freedom of speak and they need their colleagues and the space to write. We're blessed to be in a position to provide exactly that. You think about it Bill, there's a lot of economists, who've just finished their PhDs. There're no jobs out there in academia, but they have talent. They have skills and I consider intellectuals to be treasures of the world.

So we're providing a home for them. Robert Wright, a historian is now here, Pete Earle PhD candidate and economics with years and years of experience in Wall Street writes about stock markets. And I've got to tell you, from my point of view, I'm the least talented among these people which is great for me. I love working within a framework of division of labor. So I don't have to understand everything about financial markets, Pete takes care of that. I don't have to understand everything about 18th century and colonial history because Robert Wright takes care of that, and so on. So we've become a real community and our contents kind of interesting and unique in the sense that we're not going for... I guess you would say sort of clicks, we're not an advertising based website.

We're really going for high-level content that regular people can understand, that addresses in light of good history, good theory, good principles the world around us and as a way of being a light during what I consider to be really dark times. And so, that's the way we've run our editorial policy. It's like, I don't worry about using big words.

Bill Walton ([06:18](#)):

Well, one of the reasons I launched this show, it began as a hobby a couple of years ago, I've got a library filled with books written by you, and a lot of other people, that I spend a lot of time writing in the margins and yellow highlights. And I thought, it would be really interesting to take these bright people and try to make this into something where we can take those big words and maybe break them down into smaller pieces, so more people can understand the big issues. And I'm hopeful that this is the first of many conversations we can have with you. I've had a couple chats with your colleague, John Tamny and George Gilder. So, hopefully there's more to come. So, let me jump into it.

You've written this book which is a compilation of some of the essays you wrote during 2020. And it ends in September, but never less, it's a great overview of where we've been, where we were in the fall. And then I think it also presages where we are now. It's called Liberty in Lockdown, Jeffrey Tucker. This is on Amazon.

Jeffrey Tucker ([07:23](#)):

Yeah.

Bill Walton ([07:23](#)):

Terrific book, terrific overview. So, let's start right there, where... This is such a huge issue, when do you think this ends? We'll back up to where we are there, but this is been going on for almost a year and we're watching the political class, enjoy their power. And we're also, unfortunately watching people give up, ordinary people giving up their freedoms because of the edicts they're pronounced. It's...

Jeffrey Tucker ([07:57](#)):

It's shocking.

Bill Walton ([07:58](#)):

It doesn't feel like America.

Jeffrey Tucker ([07:59](#)):

Yeah. It doesn't, and it's a little bit... I'll tell you something else that doesn't feel like America is that the political class got away with it. Right. That's a little bit of a mystery, I think, to all of us. Certainly I'm speaking for myself that I would have thought there would have been more resistance, but I think there's a number of reasons why there wasn't. The media has been almost united since first, second week of March in favor of lockdown. So that's been a strange thing. I think you have enough ruling class intellectuals that were able to live online and disregard the workers and peasants, bringing their food and delivering the mail and that sort of thing. So we got to a critical mass where lockdown seemed plausible at least for some sector of the country.

And then it happened in the middle of the craziest political season of my life, where you had derangement on all sides, whether it was pro-Trump derangement or anti-Trump derangement. And so, it all just got mixed up and things got very confusing, like in late February you had the... For lack of a better term, some figures on the right wing of American political thought, they were extremely alarmist about the virus and even apocalyptic about what was going to happen. Then you had people on the left, whether it was Slate Magazine, Psychology Today, Washington Post, even The New York Times at that point was writing articles saying, listen, this is a textbook virus, we should deal with it with good public health principles. And so, over the course of those 14 days, that followed from February 27th, all the way to March 16th or so, March 12th, the sides flipped and it became a heavily political issue.

And so, Americans were genuinely confused by this, not knowing which side to be on, especially since Trump himself flipped from being, Oh, this is not any big deal, to suddenly, Oh, you can't... If you live in Europe, you can't fly here, because you're going to bring the virus. So we went from one extreme to the other just practically, overnight. And then there was this panic, many Americans thought, well, there's no way that you'd just completely upend our lives and give us preposterous regulations like [inaudible 00:10:14] stand close to six feet to anybody else.

Bill Walton ([10:18](#)):

Do you know where the six foot rule came from? Out of thin air.

Jeffrey Tucker ([10:23](#)):

Yeah, the idea of-

Bill Walton ([10:27](#)):

The last century starting during the pandemic 1918, it was three feet. I think in Britain, they decided, well, they were going to have to deal with this, and they want people to distance and be very safe. And so instead of the three feet, they doubled it to six feet. By making it six feet, it effectively shut down all sporting events and theater and restaurants. Three feet a space would be fine, but you could work with that, but six feet, you got a problem.

Jeffrey Tucker ([10:58](#)):

You can't have dancing, you can't have movies. Presumption behind the rule was change to the homogeneous with regard to risk, right? So it was applied to everybody, whether you were vulnerable to three outcomes from COVID, or if you could just get it and shake it off and upgrade your immune system. Right. So it applied to everybody, whether you were sick or not, or anything, it was just a one size fits all solution. And really attacks the very core of human interaction. It's just crazy stuff, but the crazier things got, whether it was the mask or the the travel restrictions or you can't go to church on Easter, it's like, we're gas lighting for a good part of the year. Just to fast forward to today, I think there's a new clarity that's dawning.

One of the things that's happening right now is you've got these governors that are gradually opening. And they're trying to figure out a rationale for re-opening whether it's Cuomo or they're opening in Idaho, New Jersey announced some openings today, expanding crowds from 25 to 50, but you still can't sit at a bar and blah, blah, blah, because the bar has COVID. So they're trying to unravel it in a way that doesn't make them look ridiculous. So they have to say data. They're like, well, there's fewer cases now. And it's generally true that we've seen roughly a 50% decline in cases over the last say 45 days. But still, what's interesting about a lot of the existing restrictions that have been repealed, is they were passed in November when cases are about where they are today.

So, there's no real science here and you've seen a dearth of admission from governors and public health officials that they're full of it, right. Or that they were wrong all along. Nobody's admitting that, so they're trying to unravel it, but as it unravels, I think the public awareness is kind of grow that this was crazy stuff.

Bill Walton ([12:57](#)):

Well, in your view, was this a textbook virus?

Jeffrey Tucker ([13:00](#)):

Yes.

Bill Walton ([13:01](#)):

So we had viruses, we had pandemics in 1968, '69, I went to Woodstock and I didn't know it at the time, but we're in the middle of a pandemic. We had one in '57, we've had them back and we've never locked down like this.

Jeffrey Tucker ([13:16](#)):

No, that's right. Even 1918, which you mentioned earlier, there were a sporadic lockdown since San Francisco and Chicago and New York went on its merry way. And public health discovered after 1918 that these quarantines did no good in terms of disease mitigation. And they swore they would never use them again and we didn't. As you said, '57, '58 was a grim in time. And by the way, these other pathogens that came along in '57, '58 was particularly wicked on young people actually and pregnant women. A much greater degree of range of severe outcomes from those two flu years of '57, '58, '68, '69. But we didn't lock down. What we did is we used intelligence and doctor, patient relationships and let people judge the risks for themselves.

Bill Walton ([14:07](#)):

But there's been so much just disinformation about this, you've written and I don't know your sources, but Americans, if you polled them, think 9% of people have died from COVID-19.

Jeffrey Tucker ([14:18](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Bill Walton ([14:23](#)):

In reality, it's 0.04%. So there's this disconnect, I think we've had a... There's a virus and that's a pandemic of a virus, but then we've got a pandemic of fear that's been whooped up.

Jeffrey Tucker ([14:35](#)):

Sure. The average age of death is slightly older than the average age of the American lifespan. Around the world, it's actually much higher. And also, CDC says 94% of the severe outcomes with COVID were associated with additional co-morbidities and only 6% was COVID alone. So, you have a case of a virus here that's by historical standards, pretty precise with a very definite demographic target. And we should have very early on relied on natural immunities to create herd immunity. I can't say for sure it would have been over in April or May, it depends because it's a migratory virus, right? So it got caught much later than it was in the Northeast of the United States and the South and so on. But there's about 70 days in which the virus is really hot and going after its targets.

But in the world of viruses, there's a trade off between severity and prevalence. And that's what evolution has created. You can look at it from a mathematical point of view. You can look at it from evolutionary point of view, but that's always the case. To some extent, these things are self-managing. You can use a little bit of intelligence to protect yourself. However, imperfectly for example, it's always been the case that as people get older, they start taking magazines on how to manage older age. And the advice even before World War II is that if you're of a certain age, during flu season you probably

shouldn't get out in big crowds because your immune system's not working as well and you probably shouldn't take that risk.

You should let other people get it and wait for the herd immunity to arrive. And one of the funny things, Bill is that this old wisdom, I don't know what happened, it went away in the 21st century, but when this virus first came along, I called my beloved mother. And I said, listen, I'm a little concerned about coming to see you, because of the virus, she said, well, listen, I understand it doesn't matter to me. But she said, I consider these pathogens to be normal, but I tell you what, if we give it a month, then all the young people get it and the virus would die up and then you can come see me. That's what she told me.

Bill Walton ([16:47](#)):

So you should have put her in touch with Dr. Fauci.

Jeffrey Tucker ([16:52](#)):

It's funny. I mentioned this story to a Harvard epidemiologist, She said, she should have been head of the CDC.

Bill Walton ([16:59](#)):

Exactly. So, you're saying if 6% were not related to co-morbidities, that's roughly 25,000 people out of the 400,000, 24,000 of 400,000 people that people say have died from this. Yet there's so much noise in those numbers. If we had a regular flu season this year, I don't hear about flu. I don't hear about flu-

Jeffrey Tucker ([17:25](#)):

No, if we have not had a flu is regular flu season. You can look at the CDC right now and see that this time last year... Okay. I haven't checked the data in about three weeks, but I did a month long look. The whole country is painted red this time last year, this year it's entirely green, so we've not had a flu season. So COVID comes along and takes up people with broken immune systems. That's [inaudible 00:17:52] story. It's not a complicated story, if immune system doesn't work, you're not going to be able to handle COVID. If it does work, then you'll download the latest edition of your immune system and start battling it again. That's basically the story. As for the vaccine, there's a lot of complications there, there's a lot of fear.

The latest poll says 50% of Americans don't want it. Which is why I think we're probably not gonna get vaccine passports, that sort of thing. Because people are raised suspicious. They made a huge mistake with the vaccine calling it Operation Warp Speed, because it makes people think, I don't know, it seems like this came along too fast, this is a little bit suspicious. Not to mention this our first real mass use of mRNA technology that we've had. This is not a traditional inoculation. This is a gene altering... It's gaming the immune system to slice off the top proteins that are activated in the case of infections.

Bill Walton ([18:51](#)):

It is a political phenomenon and there's also a narrative that is supposed to be the accepted narrative. And I've done a couple of shows where I had people on talking about masks and they were doubting their efficacy. And a lot of the things that were part of the narrative, I don't think are necessarily true. And yet, if you try to say that you get canceled, I've run... Ron Johnson Senator from Wisconsin, did a piece I think yesterday or today in the Wall Street Journal, where YouTube canceled the Senate hearing,

he had a doctor on that was saying that the virus was a lot less dangerous than had been portrayed, and yet YouTube took it down. Nobody's supposed [crosstalk 00:19:41] on a view.

Jeffrey Tucker ([19:41](#)):

Oh the idea of these tech titans suddenly experts in public health and viruses is absolutely despicable. I have a friend of mine who wrote... Not a friend, a friend of friend who wrote a really nice peer reviewed study for a magazine or a journal targeted towards dentistry. And his article on masks came out in 2016, a comprehensive take down of masks with, I don't know, 150 footnotes that masks that don't actually provide virus protection. And so he said, the purpose of the article was to say, dentists, should need to stop wearing these things are inhumane. And they're silly. So his article stayed up for four years and suddenly about six weeks ago, the journal withdrew the study and took it down from the website. Well, it's still up on Web Archive, so you can read it.

But you don't know, you've got one line that's coming out and YouTube and Twitter and everything said, well, we're going to comply with the CDC and the WHO. Well, here's the problem, WHO keeps changing its tune all the time, that sort of CDC. So there's no consistent line here. Right. So I don't really understand. Again, I think you put your finger on it when you talked about the politics of this. At some point it seemed to the tech titans that Trump was in favor of opening it up and had fundamental doubts about the science of other stuff. And so they decided to go the other way, just because they hate Trump's guts. I think that's essentially it. They also associate Trump's support with some of that domestic insurrection and all this kind of thing. So they think they're doing good by taking all these things down, but all they're really doing is interfering with the progress of science.

Bill Walton ([21:39](#)):

Well, anything that Trump wanted, they were against. So it was obvious, but I think Trump and I've been a Trump supporter remain. Because I think he did a lot of good in many ways, not all, but many. I think he made a mistake when he tried to get out in front of this. And what is it? April, March or April, May where he started saying, well, I've saved three, four million lives because of the lockdowns, and I've done all this. He tried to make himself look like a hero that he'd saved us from something terrible, when in fact what he should have been saying was, this is a typical virus kids. Get on with your life. We've been through this before the nature takes its course. So that would have been leadership. And instead he wanted to look heroic.

Jeffrey Tucker ([22:30](#)):

Yeah, Bill, you're the first person... I wrote this myself, but it's first time I've had talks with anybody who agrees with me about this point. So he went from dismissing the virus, which he shouldn't have done to overreacting, there's March 12th, the [inaudible 00:22:46] order. And there is March 13th, issuing of basically a school shut down order that was declassified about six weeks later. And by March 16th the entire country was shut down and he himself got scared and panicked. And then he tried to justify what he did by saying, well, people tell me I saved two, three. One time, I heard him say four million lives. Okay. That's very interesting, if that's true, he's saying lockdowns work, that shutdowns work, that-

Bill Walton ([23:15](#)):

Well, that's when the Imperial College model said, of course that was...

Jeffrey Tucker ([23:20](#)):

So he went along with it because he wanted to be a hero. And then you recall... There was a lot of confusion in the spring, but you recall that the governor of Georgia decided this is all nonsense and decided to open up and you recall that Trump warned against it. He said, it's too soon. Don't open up. So I think that was in late April. So there was already a confused messaging there. Trump didn't really get his head screwed on straight until Scott Atlas showed up in, I think late July, early August. And Scott Atlas is an actual scientist aware of the literature and spent many, many evenings with Trump, trying to explain to him about cell biology and public health in general and the demographics of risk.

And then Trump got schooled and actually got smart, but rather than take his newfound knowledge and explain to the public what needed to be explained, which is something like, okay, we've made a lot of mistakes this year. But here's what's what, and put serious doctors on stage and have them explain. He couldn't do it. He had already lost control of the messaging. And so when he did, and I was following him very carefully during the whole campaign season, of course, then he got COVID right in October and he shook it off. And then he was convinced that, Oh, this is a virus, like any virus. Right. But then he stopped talking about it completely. He went on to talk about other things, the wall and shower heads and evil of the Democrats and that sort of thing.

So meanwhile, you've got the whole country in shambles, right? Unemployment is very high, can't go to Broadway, movie, our churches, we missed Easter and then eventually Christmas and so on. And Trump, who came to power under the pledge to make America great again, was presiding over a country where in many towns, half the businesses were already shut down or the New Yorkers wind swept and he was unwilling to talk frankly about it. He just wanted it to go away. He said, Oh, all they want to do is get me to talk about the virus. I want to talk about other things. And that led to a disconnect. It was very interesting because here's a guy whose whole career he's had almost a magical ability to discern the mood of the crowd and body the sensibility of the moment, like a good entrepreneur, right. He seems to know what's going on and how to respond to it. And that instinct failed him so fundamentally throughout the fall and winter. And I think that had something to do with the outcome of the election.

Bill Walton ([25:58](#)):

Well, I think he failed us in that way. I think if you could make a case for criminal political malpractice, I think most of our political, at least the Democrat governors and mayors are guilty of it because they've really locked everybody down. And I say, everybody, I guess I don't really mean everybody. I guess it's about half the country that really truly got locked down, the intellectual class, the journalists class, the people that get to work with computers and can do their work virtually. They didn't like it, but they weren't put out of work. And so-

Jeffrey Tucker ([26:38](#)):

Yeah. That's right. I did an article about the New York Times and their messaging on this. And they have this map where you can type in your zip code and it'll tell you how afraid you should be. And it's funny because there are standards for very serious outbreaks. It's something like 11 per 100,000. I live in a County with 50,000 people, meaning that like five people have a PCR test that's positive. And according to The New York Times you should not leave your home. You should certainly not go to church together with people, should not invite friends over for cocktails. Should not travel, should wear a mask all the time. But one of the things that's interesting they tipped their ruling class hand with this remark. They say, don't go out to restaurants or don't go to the grocery store if you're going to put it. Order your food in and have it delivered. By whom? By people who don't read The New York Times-

Bill Walton ([27:42](#)):

Unless you're one of the people who were in the ordering or the delivery guy. How much damage do you think this has done to the social fabric? And can we-

Jeffrey Tucker ([27:52](#)):

I think it's in shattering and the lockdowns have really violated the social contract, we always have had with pathogens and infectious diseases. We're in the age of enlightenment, with democracy, equality and the rule of law, we agreed implicitly, not by a physical contract but implicitly, to all equally share in the burden of herd immunity. No one class could separate herself out from other people. In the ancient world is always the elites that made the workers and peasants get the diseases, so they could stay pure and clean. Right? This is true in the deep South in the 19th century too, is that under slavocracy is always the slaves that bore the burden of disease and some whole systems around the world and India, there was a whole caste system built up around the problem of infectious disease.

So you had a whole class of people labeled as unclean and forced to start living in a certain area and operate a sandbag, for the pathogen. An enlightened world under democracy, we believe in equality. We don't believe in this kind of system. We all deal with the presence of pathogens equally. We don't assign to some people the burden of getting them and getting it over them. So that the way the pathogen is disabled and the rest of us can stay away from it. We don't do that. Instead, we all share equally with one exception. We protect the people who are most vulnerable, which are typically older people with broken immune systems. So we use intelligence. And the thing about that age standard of focused protection is that age applies to everybody, regardless of income or class or profession or race or religion or language, everybody gets old.

So an enlightened society says if you're older and your immune system's broken, you can hide, you can protect yourself, the rest of us, will deal with the pathogen. And then it will be able to become endemic, will reach an endemic equilibrium. And then you can once again come out. That's the way we've always dealt with it, lockdowns flip that whole thing on its head and drive us back to some more of a feudal approach. It's like, okay, this is your job. This is your income level. You get to be cleaner, the virus, let's assign it to all the workers and peasants out there. It's a brutal and primitive and medieval style of dealing with disease. I use the word medieval, I'm quoting Donald McNeil who wrote in The New York Times on February 28, to deal with the coronavirus let's go medieval.

Very interesting article where he basically [inaudible 00:30:42] for locking people in cages and dividing workers, according to the central and under central and quarantining the sickers, as well as the well, and it was a tremendously evil article. But you think about all the ways in which we have in fact, gone medieval, we have a new feudal caste system. I sit at home and enjoy my protected environment while the workers and peasants bring me groceries. We abolished dentistry basically for the whole of summer, where dentistry services collapsed by 70%. Access to medical care has been dramatically down. We've seen deaths of despair, it was actually the thing you would see in the middle ages. And we went even so far as de Blasio and Cuomo blaming the Hasidic Jews for the spreading of disease. So in that sense, we also went medieval.

This has been 12 months, 11 months of hell, where we decided to basically reject all the enlightened values, equality, science, everything to perform an insane social medical experiment on the population of the U.S. Other governors did it too, mostly copycatting the U.S. and China, around the world. We've got a lot to come to terms with.

Bill Walton ([32:05](#)):

Well, we talked about Trump and America, and some States, Dakota, Florida, didn't lock down and let people live their lives. And their outcomes are actually better than those that did lock down. So there's a lot of evidence, but we're a little myopic about America. You've written about New Zealand and Australia, and it's striking. They are in many ways worse than what we're doing here. And then the UK and London, I think they just passed a law where they upped the fine from 200 pounds to 1200 pounds, if you're seen on the street after curfew and you're asking people for their vaccine papers. It's a worldwide phenomenon. And I guess that's... Just a little drop of footnote here.

I play tennis and the Australian Open is now, and as I understand it, if you want to play in the Australian Open, you have to go in quarantine for two weeks before the tournament, which is why they delayed it. And Roger Federer, he's now claiming a knee injury, but I think the real reason his wife didn't want to go sit in the hotel room for two weeks to wait around for a tournament. It's crazy.

Jeffrey Tucker ([33:18](#)):

It sounds scientific. New Zealand and Australia-

Bill Walton ([33:22](#)):

You're saying scientific, I say it gets crazy.

Jeffrey Tucker ([33:25](#)):

Yeah, well, Western Australia, Perth, just [inaudible 00:33:31] what they call a snap lockdown because of a single case. So you've got these two Island paradises that have decided to pursue a zero COVID policy, which is a huge mistake. What it means is that a whole generation of people's immune systems will have skipped a pathogen, thereby rendering their immune systems, extremely naive and vulnerable to something much more dangerous down the road. It's also unbearably selfish, and again, violating of the global social contract for infectious diseases that they're demanding the best of the world deal with the pathogen, obtain herd immunity out there. And they're going to just sit and enjoy themselves, but I knew it was coming to Western Australia and just like it hasn't left Sydney or Adelaide or the rest it's...

The pathogen will be all over Australia. Now, they've got a number of ways to deal with it. They can continue to brutally violate people's rights as they're doing to Perth right now, where everybody's mask of staying at home and all this kind of stuff, or at some point they have to realize that they have to become part of the endemic global equilibrium on SARS-CoV-2, or they're never going to be able to have tourism again. They've even locked their citizens inside their own country. And they consider it a success. The arrogance of the political class in New Zealand and Australia is absolutely shocking. And it's unhealthy for these people to have decline to absorb this virus into their immune systems.

What they're doing... Bill, in history where you see before the age of globalism during and after World War I, many, many people around the world, had not been exposed to the full range of pathogens that exist in the world, so immune systems were very naive and they can seem to live very happy long lives for a while, until something goes wrong and it just wipes them all out [inaudible 00:35:42] history is replete with examples of these, small tribes and small communities that seem to get along just fine until something comes along and suddenly they're all dead of smallpox, right? So, this is what we're dealing with here. With the age of globalism, what happened in the 20th century is the germs got all mixed up all over the world, and it was good for us.

That's one of the reasons we're living longer and better lives, we have the best immune systems in the course of the 20th century, we had the best immune systems of any people in the history of the world. That's one of the reasons why we lived much longer, much healthier lives was because of exposure, not from sheltering in place but by being out and about.

Bill Walton ([36:29](#)):

Let me see if I can frame it. There's so many things we can dig into, but essentially you believe, I think, I believe that this has been bad science, and yet we've taken the view that locked downs, that quarantines, that closing your Island is going to protect you from this, when in fact it will not. And there are all these mistakes that have been made, starting Cuomo, throwing people into the nursing homes in New York, mistakes. And lives have been lost. Healthcare has been deferred, the social costs, the suicides, the alcoholism, the drug use, they've imposed an enormous cost on America and the rest of the world.

And we started out with this where you said, gee, how do they say, well, nevermind? Where's Emily Litella from Saturday Night Live now, where she goes into something, Oh, well, that was all wrong. We're we're going to go another way. And you close your book with an interesting chapter with the title, we need a principled anti-lockdown movement, and I'm looking in your resume and I don't see futurist on it. You're not claiming futurist, but I'm going to give you that job right now. How does this unwind? What's it look like six months from now a year from now? We're never going to go back to the old normal, but whatever the new normal looks like, how do we get there?

Jeffrey Tucker ([38:03](#)):

This anti-lockdown movement that I ended my book with, I wrote that chapter realizing I think there is something that's fundamentally changed ideologically and intellectually about us in light of the pandemic and the lockdowns. It's really been a test of who you are and what you believe. And sometimes it has been unpredictable. Some people have approved of lockdowns. I always thought would fight them. Other people are fighting them in ways I would have expected them to approve of them. So we have a new way of thinking, I think about political philosophy and ideology and ideas in light of what's happened to us. And I see the anti-lockdown movement growing enormously. I was for a good part of 2020 felt very alone. I don't feel that way anymore.

We're growing and we're mighty and we're working every single day and people's minds are opening up. Once, you let go of the fear. That's the key thing. Once you get rid of the fear, then you become willing to consider new possibilities and then willing to consider that maybe you've engaged in a rational behavior for good part of 2020. And I think that's happening to people now. I'm glad in a sense to see the Trump/Biden split, that we were dealt with through a good part of the fall and winter is now gone. And so we can work towards depoliticizing this, and you're starting to see now actual science prevailing over hysteria and these agent-based modeling fanatics.

They gave us lockdowns in the first place. So I see this unraveling gradually in fact, every day there's another state is inching towards opening up, with pseudoscience, right? It's like, okay, now you can have 50 people in a gathering, Oh, it turns out now you can have 60% capacity in a restaurant. With temperature checks and plexiglass, you can now all go to the movies and so on. So they're inching more and more towards openness. They're going to have to, and I see the public is getting angry and angry and angry at these restrictions and wondering why our rights and liberties were taken away from us. So I'm expecting by the summer and fall and certainly by the winter to be fully back to normal and then starts the intellectual decompression.

How did this happen? Who did it to us? Why? Under whose influence? Why did these crazy lockdowners reject the consensus science? How come every public health official recommended against this for a 100 years, and yet we embraced it anyway? And then that's when the recrimination start and the acts of vengeance. And it's going to be grim. I think it's probably going to be 10 years before we fully come to terms with the outrageous and absurdities of what we've gone through in 2020.

Bill Walton ([41:17](#)):

Oh my. I think I was looking for something more optimistic, but I think I agree with you. I do think it's going to be a long time because... And there still be the partisan cloud around this [inaudible 00:41:36].

Jeffrey Tucker ([41:36](#)):

And Bill, I noticed that you do like this, you're a political person, which is great. I don't see any future for any of the Republicans who acquiesce to lockdowns. And the two greatest heroes in the Republican party, as far as I can tell right now are Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, who opened up a gas sometime am I right? In July or August. And he, more than anybody else came as close to anyone in this country to apologizing. He told the history of his lockdowns. He told about how, he started consulting with people like Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford, Sunetra Gupta, world class genius at Oxford, and then Martin Kulldorff at Harvard and upgraded his own understanding of things.

And then opened up, he realized that they had basically made a mistake. He didn't quite use that word, but it came very close. And now Florida is living almost normal, which living in New England right now, I can tell you most people around here don't even remember normal, but it's normal in Florida. I was just in Texas, by the way. And it's not Florida, but most of the compliance that you see in Texas is pure theater and everybody knows it. So things are about to fall apart.

Bill Walton ([43:09](#)):

And you had two heroes. And I think I know the second one.

Jeffrey Tucker ([43:12](#)):

Sorry, we know who it is. It's Kristi Noem. She shut down her schools for 10 days and then thought, you know what? This is dumb. This is [inaudible 00:43:25] country of freedom and human rights. And I think society works and I'm going to trust my people. And also she's just great. She didn't trust the models. She didn't trust the aggressive claims that lockdowns are scientific. She didn't believe any of that stuff. And she, boy, did she bear the slings and arrows of the press, my God.

Bill Walton ([43:12](#)):

Still is.

Jeffrey Tucker ([43:47](#)):

Yes, still is. But those two are the great heroes right now among the Republicans of all stripes. Whether it's just the party activists or the party elites. It's a lesson in life and look, if you exercise courage at great political risks to yourself. And you come out on top, you're going to be a hero. And those two I'd say in the Republican party deserve their current notoriety. And if we're looking to 2024, I would say that if they're willing to run and they're probably going to be recruited, actually they would make a wonderful ticket. And I expect lockdowns to be on the the ballot and that election. And in fact, every election coming forward, people want to know, what do you think about lockdowns? What'd you think about capacity restrictions in restaurants? What's your view towards travel restrictions? Would you believe in mandated vaccines? These are the questions politicians are going to have to answer, and they're going to have to get smart about it. They can't avoid the topic. Lockdowns are the issue right now. It's not going to go away.

Bill Walton ([45:03](#)):

Jeffrey, thank you. I think you're right. And I would love to talk some more, but we've run short on time. Partying thoughts about where you think besides the political piece, where do we end up socially?

Jeffrey Tucker ([45:21](#)):

Well, I think a lot of it depends on where we end up intellectually. I think we have an urgent need for all of us to get smart and good principled, to understand, to read, figure out all that information that your grandparents knew about viruses that somehow got lost in the shuffle, and then act, and then speak. There's not a person listening to the show today who can't make a difference right where you are to be bold and courageous, take back your rights and your freedoms. And if we all do this together, we can be the country we know we can be, the kind of people that we should be, live the lives, the lives that we want to live, which are not lockdown lives, but they're free lives of choice, rationality science, clarity, and progress. We need to get back to that. It's up to us. I don't think anything is baked into the fabric of history. History is written by its participants and we're participants in that. And we can make a big difference every one of us.

Bill Walton ([46:24](#)):

Well, thank you. I think we all need to get back into the human flourishing business and think about those great achievements we had to be aiming at, rather than trying to tear each other apart. So Jeffrey Tucker Editorial Director of the American Institute for Economic Research and author of a terrific book, Liberty or Lockdown, and there's a lot more to dig into besides what we've covered today. And I hope you all take a chance to buy it and read it. And Jeffrey, until next time, thank you.

Jeffrey Tucker ([46:55](#)):

Thank you.

Bill Walton ([46:57](#)):

And thank you for listening. We'd love to hear what you think. Let me know on Facebook or Twitter, where you can find The Bill Walton Show. For previous episodes, you can also find us on Apple Podcast, Spotify, YouTube, and all the other platforms, and of course at thebillwaltonshow.com, where I hope you will subscribe to the show. Thank you.

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